APPENDIX

TO

Scripture and Tradition.

A REPLY TO MR. MATURIN'S LETTER

ON

"The Claims of the Catholic Church."

By J. M. CRAMP, D.D.

PRICE SIX PENCE.

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APPENDIX.

(No. 1.)

WAS PETER BISHOP OF ROME?

The first thought that strikes an inquirer is the absolute silence of Scripture. If it were true, as Romanists affirm, that Peter was constituted head of the whole Church on earth, it was of the utmost importance that all the Churches should know it, and should know it from the very first. But here is the startling fact, that though all the books of the New Testament were written after the Apostle's supposed entrance on his office, and even after his becoming bishop of Rome (according to the theory), there is not the slightest reference to the matter in the inspired volume. This is altogether unaccountable.

The early fathers, as has been already observed, were entirely ignorant of Peter's presidency over the Roman Church. No mention is made of it in any authentic writing previous to the time of Justin Martyr. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who flourished in the early part of the second century, is cited as a witness; but the sum of his testimony is merely this, (if indeed it be his at all, which is quite doubtful), that Peter wrote his first epistle from "Babylon," which, he says, figuratively means "Rome." No reliance can be placed on that fancy.*

Then we come to Dionysius of Corinth (died about A. D. 178), who, in a letter addressed to the Church of Rome, fragments of which have been preserved by Eusebius, says of

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* Euseb. Hist. ii 15.

Peter and Paul—"They both came into our city of Corinth and instructed us, scattering the seed of evangelical doctrine; they also went together to Italy, and after they had in like manner instructed you, suffered martyrdom at the same time."* This statement is at variance with the narrative of the sacred historian. It is abundantly evident that Peter was not at Corinth when Paul was there, and that Paul never went from Corinth to Italy. Whether they both met at Rome and suffered there, is just possible. It is certain, however, that Paul's first visit to the imperial city took place when he was taken there as a prisoner in the year 61. His second visit, previous to his martyrdom, may be assigned to the year 67 or 68. If, according to Dionysius, Peter accompanied him, he could not have been resident at Rome more than a few months. His twenty-five years' episcopate there must be classed among the fables.

Tertullian states that Peter baptized (*immersed*—"tinxit")—in the Tiber, and that he was crucified at Rome.† Admitting the truth of these statements it would not follow that he was bishop of that city.

Caius and Irenœus style Peter and Paul the "founders" of the Church of Rome.‡ That Paul was not its founder is evident because a Church had existed there long before his visit. Consequently, these statements fall to the ground. And this further is noticeable, that the ancient fathers, in tracing the succession of the Roman bishops, do not place Peter among them, though they speak of him (incorrectly) as one of the founders of the Church. They uniformly declare that *Linus* was the first bishop, and the enumeration proceeds accordingly.§

The conclusion is, that whereas it is possible that Peter visited Rome, as Origen states, towards the end of his life, or

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*Euseb. Hist. ii. 25. †De Baptismo, c. 4: De Præscript, c 36. ‡Euseb. His. ii. 25. §Euseb. ut. sup. iii. 2.

just before his martyrdom,* the story of his bishopric is altogether fictitious. But if he was not bishop of Rome, the ecclesiastical fabric falls to pieces, for the papal supremacy rests on the assumption that the occupants of the Roman see are Peter's successors. A few words on that subject may be added.

That the supremacy was unknown in the early ages may be easily proved. The bishop of Rome was treated as bishop of the Church in the city of Rome. Nothing was known for a long time of any more extensive jurisdiction.

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch was put to death at Rome in the reign of Trajan. On his journey from Antioch he wrote a letter to the Roman Church. It is not a little singular that neither in that letter nor in the narrative of his martyrdom is there any reference to the bishop of Rome. What would be thought in these times of a letter written to the Church of Rome without any mention of the Pope?

Polycarp suffered martyrdom at Smyrna in the year 167. The Church at Smyrna published a narrative of his martyrdom, in a circular letter addressed to the Church at Philomelium, and "to all the Churches of the holy and catholic faith;" but there is no reference to the church of Rome or to its bishop.

When, towards the close of the second century, the practice of appealing to churches founded by apostles sprung up, the bishops of Rome eagerly availed themselves of the circumstance, and put forth pretensions of an extraordinary character. As the Apostle Paul had been thrice resident in their city—the first time when he "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house,"—the second, for some months before his martyrdom; and as the Apostle Peter also was believed to have suffered there, his death being preceded by a short period of christian labour—these apostles came to be regarded as in

*Euseb. Hist. iii. 1.

a certain sense the "founders" of the church. It had existed long before, but their preaching and other efforts had been so blessed that it seemed as if the church received new life. Gratitude, mingled with an almost pardonable vanity, persuaded them to date their history accordingly, and thus Rome acquired the title of an "Apostolic Church." Her honour was greater than that of any other Church, in that she could boast of *two* Apostles as her supposed founders: she had besides the advantage of being established in the metropolis of the empire. Men had been accustomed from their earliest years to contemplate the imperial city as the centre of communication, the place of final appeal. It was not difficult to transfer those views and feelings to ecclesiastical matters. What the Emperor was in things temporal, that the bishop of the metropolis would aspire to be, in things spiritual.

Victor I. (A. D. 192–202) made the trial. There was a difference of opinion respecting the proper time for observing Easter. Fourteen bishops assembled at Rome, at Victor's request, and agreed that Easter should be kept on the Sunday after the full moon succeeding the vernal equinox. The Asiatics met at Ephesus, under the presidency of Polycrates, bishop of that city, and resolved that Easter should be kept on the 14th day of the moon, on whatever day of the week it might fall. Polycrates informed Victor of this decision. The Roman bishop was highly enraged. He resolved to hold no fellowship with the Quarto-decimans (as those on the opposite side were designated), and he wrote to that effect, excluding them from Communion with his church. This arrogant and unchristian proceeding drew upon him the displeasure of his brethren. The letter sent by Irenœus on that occasion has been preserved. He held the same sentiments as the Roman bishop, but he held them in charity. It appeared to him a monstrous thing to excommunicate a brother on such slight grounds. Diversity of celebration, he observed, had existed from the very first. Some fasted one day before Easter; some,

two; some, for a longer period; but no one had yet ventured to maintain that diversity was inconsistent with fellowship. The Quarto-decimans retained their peculiarities, in spite of Victor's harmless thunder.* This was the first attempt of the bishop of Rome to impose his sentiments on other churches, and it signally failed.

The history of the dispute between Stephen I. of Rome and other bishops is very instructive. Many of the Churches held that baptism administered by heretics was null and void; but such baptism was regarded as valid at Rome, if the requisite form and manner were observed. At a Council held at Iconium, A. D. 256, it was resolved that all ecclesiastical acts performed by heretics were invalid. When Stephen heard of it he was very angry, and excommunicated the Council, that is, refused them fellowship in his church. A deputation was sent to remonstrate with him, but he refused to hear or see them. Firmilian, bishop of Cœserea, wrote a narrative of the affair, in a letter to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. Stephen was roughly handled on the occasion. His "audacity" and "insolence" were boldy reproved. Absolute uniformity, it was observed, did not exist among the churches; different places had different customs, but they did not destroy or lessen the love of the brethren; at Rome itself many things were done for which no apostolic authority could be pleaded, and which differed from the practice of the mother church at Jesusalem. The "open and manifest folly" of Stephen was exposed, in boasting of being Peter's successor, while he sanctioned that which Peter would have condemned. "To the custom of Rome," said Firmilian, "we oppose the custom of truth, holding from the beginning that which has been delivered to us by Christ and his apostles." Cyprian was equally firm. In an opening speech delivered by him at a Council held at

*Eusebius Hist. v. 24.

Carthage respecting the baptism of heretics, A. D. 256, he said, "no one of us pretends to be a bishop of bishops, or tyrannically compels his colleagues to obey him, since every bishop has full liberty and power to act for himself; and as he judges no man, so he cannot be judged by his brethren. But we looked for the judgment of Jesus Christ, the universal Lord, who only has power to appoint us to the government of his churches, and to judge our acts." These are the words of a man who acknowledged no superior in religious matters, and who was prepared to withstand every attempt at usurpation.*

This brings us to the middle of the third century. It is unnecessary to pursue the inquiry any further. The testimony of history is clearly adverse to the claims of the bishop of Rome.

NOTE.—Irenœus and Cyprian as well as Victor and Stephen, are acknowledged as *Saints* by the Church of Rome, and receive the usual honours.

* Labb. et Cossart. Tom. I. pp. 751–760, 786.

(No. 2.)

THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN.

Since the publication of the first edition, I have received from Mr. Maturin a copy of his Lecture on "the origin of Christianity in England," delivered before the "Halifax Catholic Institute." I have read the Lecture with attention and interest, but my opinion on the subject is unchanged. I cannot agree with Mr. Maturin with regard to "the origin of Christianity in England."

Mr. Maturin states the evidence very fairly. He shews that Clemens Romanus speaks of the Apostle Paul as "having come to the boundary of the West";—that Jerome says of the same Apostle that "he directed his journey towards Spain, running in imitation of his Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, his course from the Red Sea, or rather from the Eastern to the Western Ocean";—that Origen refers to the manifestation of "the power of our Lord and Saviour" in "the land of Britain";—that Eusebius, treating of the labours of the twelve Apostles and the seventy disciples, expresses his astonishment "that some individuals should have gone even to the very extremities of the earth, and have penetrated into the country of the Indians, and others have passed over the ocean to those called the British Islands";—that Chrysostom rejoices in the thought that "even the British Islands . . . . have felt the power of the word, for even there also churches and altars have been erected";—and that the same fact is referred to by Theodoret, Arnobius the younger, and Venantius Fortunatus. "The sum of their testimony is this, that Christianity was introduced into England before the close of the second century; but they are entirely silent as to the exact time at which, or the individual missionaries by whom,

the inestimable blessing of divine truth was first conveyed to the British shores. There is not one of them who refers the origin of the British Church to St. Paul, or to any other of the Apostles." (p. 21).

All this may be admitted. We do not know exactly when or by whom the Gospel was first preached in Britain. But the uniform testimony of these writers is that it was there at an early period.

By what means, then, was the blessing conveyed? Venerable Bede gives this account:—"In the year of our Lord's Incarnation 156 [it should be 161], Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made Emperor, together with his brother, Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst Eleutherus, a holy man, presided over the Roman church, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent a letter to him, entreating, that by his command he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained the object of his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith, which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquility until the time of the Emperor Diocletian."*

Here is all the appearance of a legend, like those which, unhappily, disfigure many of the pages of ecclesiastical history, and often prevent us from arriving at certainty. There was at that time no "king of Britain," in the proper sense of that expression, the Romans being in possession of the country. Calphurnius Agricola was then governor. The language attributed to the supposed king is also singularly inappropriate. He is represented as entreating the bishop of Rome that "*by his command* he might be made a Christian." That is not the language of a king, even a barbarian one. It smells rather of the monastery, and was probably the forgery of some ignorant monk, as was the letter said to have been sent by Lucius to

* Bedœ Hist. Lib. I. cap. 4, p. 44, Ed. Smith. (Mr. Maturin's translation is given.)

Elentherius, which was manufactured at a later period. A translation of it may be seen in Fuller's Church History, Book I. Lecture 2. § 6.

If the fact had been as is here related, is it at all likely that the above mentioned writers would have been ignorant of it? So remarkable a circumstance as an application from far-off Britain to Rome, and that in the shape of letter from a king to the pastor of a Christian church, would not have been unknown. It would be sure to be blazoned abroad and commented on as a signal triumph of Christianity. The silence of those Christian Fathers throws grave suspicion on the whole narrative.

It is still more surprising that Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, who so diligently informed himself on every point connected with the annals of the Church, makes no allusion to the alleged fact. There is no reference to Britain in his History; the passage quoted above is taken from his "Demonstratio Evangelica." If Eusebius had known of King Lucius and his letter, he would not have omitted to place the matter on record.

There is another witness, however, "Nennius, Abbot of Bangor," who is rather hastily dismissed by Mr. Maturin, with the observation that "though some of the circumstances mentioned by him are different from those of Bede, yet there is an essential agreement between the two narratives" (p. 27,). It is usually stated that Nennius flourished in the early part of the seventh century. If so, his work ("*Historia Britonum*") was written a hundred years before Venerable Bede's. These are his words:—"After one hundred and sixty-seven years after the advent of Christ, Lucius, king of Britain, received baptism, with all the chieftains of the whole British nation, an embassy being sent from the Roman Emperors, and from Eucharistus, the Roman Pope."* What blundering confusion is here! The *date*—"after A. D. 167" (some MSS. read A. D.

*Section 22.

164")—whereas Eleutherius did not become bishop till A. D. 177. The *name*—"Eucharistus:" some MSS. read "Evaristus," who was bishop of Rome from A. D. 100 to A. D. 109. The *facts*—that Lucius and "all the Chieftains of the whole British nation" were baptized, and that this took place in consequence of an embassy from the "Roman Emperors" (*Pagans themselves!*) and the "Roman Pope!" Ought there to be any hesitation as to the verdict in this case? Must not impartial criticism reject the whole as a fiction?

The Welsh Triads, I am aware, give the same account, substantially, though with some variations; but their authority is of small value, since it only carries us back to the sixth century. It is of importance to observe that Gildas, *the oldest British author extant*, who wrote in that century, makes no mention of Lucius, or of the application to Rome for teachers either in his "History," or in his Treatise "De excidio Britanniœ."

In fact, the tale wears the appearance of the greatest improbability. In the absence of direct proof we may presume that Christianity was transmitted from Gaul to Britiain, and therefore that Lucius (if such a person ever existed,) would be much more likely to send to the former country than to Rome, as we know that in after times the Britons applied to the Bishops of Gaul for aid when the Pelagian heresy was introduced among them. Mr. Maturin quotes Prosper, who affirms that "Pope Celestine" sent Germanus to Britain on that occasion. But Bede's account is no doubt the true one, and it is confirmed by the "*Liber Landavensis*," a document of high authority. They agree in stating that the Britons applied to the Bishops of Gaul, who convened a Council on the occasion, and sent Germanus and Lupus to their assistance.* There was no reference to Rome.—Many of the old Chroniclers, it may be proper to remark, relate that certain events took place "*under*"

*Hist. Lib. I. Cap. 17. Liber Landavensis, p. 66.

such and such a Pope, when all they meant was that they occurred *when* the Pope in question flourished—not that he had any connection with them.

But even if, stripping the legend of its contradictions and mistakes, we grant the bare fact, namely, that a person named Lucius (*King* of Britain he was not—could not be) applied to Rome and received the assistance asked for—what follows Nothing more than this, that Christian teachers from Rome communicated to the people of Britain the gospel as they understood it, and aided them in planting churches. They did not bring them under the power of the bishop of Romé, nor teach them his supremacy—for this plain reason, that he was only bishop of Rome, having no power beyond the city. The supremacy was not then invented.

Mr. Maturin dwells at length on the presence of British bishops at the Council of Arles, A. D. 314, and the Council of Sardica, A. D. 347, and argues that their concurrence in the decrees of those Councils, in which the authority of the bishop of Rome was acknowledged, indicates their subjection to the Apostolic See.

It can only prove that they assented to such manifestations of respect and deference as were then yielded to the bishop of Rome, which, however, came far short of an acknowledgment of supremacy.

The Council of Arles requested Sylvester, then bishop of Rome, to communicate their decisions to other churches. The Council of Sardica decided that a condemned bishop might appeal to Rome, the bishop of which city might, if he saw fit, direct a re-hearing of the case, and appoint assessors to take part in the investigation. But though this was a dangerous infringement on Christian liberty, and likely to prove a stepping-stone to still more perilous innovations, it is most evident that the members of the Council of Sardica were far from entertaining those views of the supremacy of Rome which have been ascribed to them. They acted and wrote as independent men, and while they deemed it proper to render especial honour to

the bishop of a supposed apostolic Church, that Church situated in the metropolis of the empire, they were equally conservative of their own authority. They did seek confirmation of their proceedings from Julius, at that time bishop of Rome, but informed him of what they had done, and requested him to notify the same to the Churches of Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia. They addressed a Circular to other Churches, giving similar information.* All this shews that the papal supremacy had not yet come into being. Consequently, the British bishops were innocent of subjection to Rome.

After the visit of Germanus and Lupus, in the year 447, we hear nothing of Christianity in Britain for more than a hundred years. The devastations of the Anglo-Saxon invaders had filled the land with wretchedness, and torn up the very foundation of society. Religion, if we may believe Gildas, suffered extremely. The clergy were slothful and vicious; the people were universally wicked; all was wreck and ruin. At length, the idolaters prevailed, and the Christian teachers withdrew to Wales and Cornwall, with the remnants of their flocks.

In 597, when Augustine was engaged in his missionary labours among the Anglo-Saxons, he encountered the British bishops. But he found that they had no knowledge of Rome, or of spiritual allegiance due to Peter's successor. On the other hand, insulated as they were from the rest of Christendom, and unacquainted with the changes that were continually taking place, they were worshipping and serving God as they had been taught by their forefathers, and in *very many* things ("*plurima*") differed from the practices then prevalent at Rome. Augustine was bent on procuring uniformity and submission. His successors, after a long struggle, accomplished the design. But originally, Britain was independent, in things ecclesiastical, and owned no subjection to the Italian prelate.

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* Labb. et Cossart. Tom. II. pp. 660–679.

(No. 3.)

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

In offering a few remarks on this subject, I wish it to be understood that the reader is supposed to be a believer in the divine origin of Christianity. It is no part of my present design to discuss the question of Christian evidences. I shall take it for granted that the credibility of the New Testament history is acknowledged; that the historians are admitted to be honest, correct, and faithful; in a word, that the truthfulness of their record cannot be impeached, and that if we refuse to believe them we must renounce all confidence in human testimony. These points being conceded, it will necessarily follow that Christianity is of God. The truth of the testimony involves the divine character of the system; for if the miracles recorded by the historians actually took place, the revelation in support of which they were wrought is the gift of heaven.

We find, on examining these books, that our Lord and his apostles uniformly refer to the sacred scriptures, and quote them as the word of God. These references are to the Old Testament. On the Saviour's authority, therefore, we are bound to receive that part of the volume, and reverently to consult it on all the subjects of which it treats. Are we equally bound to receive the writings now called the New Testament, and to regard them with the same reverence? This is a question of the deepest interest.

The Saviour, we are informed, promised his disciples, before his death, that they should receive the Holy Spirit; that he would "bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them;" that he would explain to them the whole system of truth relating to himself ("he shall recieve of mine, and shall show it unto you;") and that he would "show them

things to come": John xiv. 26: xvi. 13, 14. We should expect, in the fulfilment of these promises, that christians would be furnished with an accurate account of the Redeemer's personal instructions, and a statement of truths and principles necessary to be held, and of services to be performed, under the new dispensation. We should further expect that the writings in which these would be comprised would contain predictions of future events, accrediting the authors as prophets of God.

Now, in the books composing the New Testament we have the accomplishment of these expectations. The life and teachings of the Saviour are compendiously set before us by four writers. The system of Christian truth is clearly stated. Moral duties and positive institutions are explained and powerfully enforced. The approaching corruptions of Christianity, to issue in a lamentable "departure from the faith"—and its ultimate triumph, involving the downfall of all opposers, are foretold—and the partial fulfilment of the predictions has confirmed faith and encouraged hope. Is not this God's book? Do not its contents testify to its origin? Is it not precisely the book that was wanted, in order that, as the first witnesses were removed by death, the loss of their oral testimony might be supplied by the written page, and it might be said of each, "he being dead yet speaketh?"

Many books were written, purporting to be productions of apostles or apostolic men. They were all subjected to rigid examination. The genuine were received and the spurious were rejected. Thus the collection gradually grew up into the New Testament. When the volume was completed it was found to comprise the history, the truths, and the prophecies, which the Saviour had promised.

But the promises were given to those who were actually disciples at the time. A large portion of the volume was written by a man who did not become a Christian till some years after the Lord's ascension. This was a special case, and provision was made for it. We have the narrative of his conversion and

of his subsequent life, affording striking attestation to the truth and divine origin of Christianity. Here is a new and independent witness. That man must be believed. His services and sufferings entitle him to unlimited credence. Whoever may impose on his fellow-creatures, Paul the apostle will not be the man. And what does he say? He expressly states that he received his theology from Jesus Christ himself. "The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," Gal. i. 11, 12. Throughout his writings he appeals to this fact, and claims for himself, as well as for the other apostles, that submission which inspired men and they only have a right to require. He confirms the claim by the miracles which God wrought by him. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."—2 Cor. xii. 12.

Thus stands the argument. The New Testament historians were worthy of belief. They testified of what they had seen, and known, and heard, or had gathered from those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Among other things they inform us that the Lord Jesus made certain promises to his disciples, which were to be fulfilled after his death. We have the fulfilment in the books of the New Testament, they contain the history, the truths, and the prophecies which Jesus had promised. Those books, therefore, were written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, or, in other words, their authors were inspired. As to the nature, degree, and method of inspiration, we need not curiously inquire. It might, for aught we know, be different at different times, and in relation to different subjects. But it is dangerous to dogmatise. It is enough to have the assurance that the authors of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Man is exceedingly fond of framing plans for God, and prescribing to him modes of action. He even affects to wonder that *his*

methods of procedure have not been adopted. The construction of the divine law-book of Christianity does not please him. He would have shaped it differently. It would have come forth in all the regular, formal proportions of a system, wherein each topic might be found in its own place, and nowhere else; history, doctrine, discipline, morals, prophecy, each occupying its several niche. It is very strange to him that we should have four separate narratives of the Saviour's life—a fragmentary account of the first planting of Christianity—twenty-one epistles, some to churches, some to individuals—and one book of obscure visions and prophecies. He is confounded at the apparent want of order, and deems it very extraordinary that it should be necessary to go through such a process of comparison and disentanglement of passages in order to exhibit separately and distinctly the various parts of the divine system. Oh how often has it proved that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God!" It has pleased Him that the truths of Christianity should be interwoven with exhortations and precepts rather than systematically discussed, and that they should sometimes seem to be but incidentally introduced; but we ought not to doubt that this is the most useful manner in which they could be presented, and that there is great advantage in seeing how they are applied to practical purposes. God's way of working out the great problem of inspiration must unquestionably be the best.

The *brevity* of the sacred historian is very remarkable. How much of our Lord's history, for instance, has been suppressed! Have we not often longed for more of his discourses, and for a fuller narrative of his life? "Many other signs truly," says the Apostle John, "did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book" (John xx. 30). *Why* were they not written? The historians must have *known* a great deal more than they have told; and besides, it was promised that the Holy Spirit would "bring all things to their remembrance." Why, then, have they not been recorded?

Did not the writers *desire* to record them? Were they not anxious that all the "gracious words" and benevolent, holy deeds of the Lord Jesus should be amply detailed and set forth? How was it that they used such compression, and omitted so much? There is only one way, it seems to me, of accounting for this strange phenomenon. *They wrote under restraint.* As on one occasion Paul and his companions "assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7), so, when the authors of the New Testament sat down to commit to writing the wonderful story of the redemption, they were supernaturally prevented from giving the copious details which they possessed. The book would have been much larger if man had had his will in compiling it. But it is of God's making. We have the amount of information which it has pleased Him to communicate. And thus the very fact that so much has been left out serves to show that the writers were "moved by the Holy Ghost."

Another extraordinary circumstance may be mentioned. Peter was chosen to introduce the gospel both to the Jews and to the Gentiles. He stood high among his brethren, as he had been the first of the "first three" in the days of the Saviour. But after the meeting at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), improperly called a "Council," we hear no more of him, save that he wrote one of his letters from "Babylon." And when the divine book was to be prepared, *his* share in it did not amount to one-twelfth part of the Apostle Paul's. What shall we say to this? There may be various methods of explaining it; but for my part I cannot help supposing that it is to be traced to the divine foreknowledge of the power and authority which could be in later ages ascribed to Peter. It was determined beforehand that the sacred book should contain nothing which could warrant such assumptions. Those who plead for Peter's supremacy cannot find it in the New Testament. If any Apostle appears to be the head of Christianity it is not Peter, but Paul. No one but Paul ventured to say, "So ordain I in all Churches:" see 1 Cor. iv. 17: vii. 17: 2 Cor. xi. 28.

The preceding observations relate chiefly to the *external* proofs of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The *internal* proofs are no less strikingly convincing.

There is a peculiarity in the style of the sacred writers which it is difficult to characterise. Perhaps we cannot do better than say that they wrote as men who were "moved by the Holy Ghost." Under that influence even their historical memorials assumed a more than human form. No others would have written of miracles as they did. No wonder is expressed. There is no effort to direct the attention of the reader. A miraculous cure is narrated with the same calmness and precision as a journey from one place to another. And if from the historical we proceed to the epistolary, we meet with still more marked manifestations of what may be called the heavenly style of writing. Those letters were written by men who were conscious of power. There is a majesty, a condensed richness of thought, a fulness of meaning, indicating an acquaintedness with the "secret things" of the Most High, and a commanding tone and manner which no good man would assume, unless he felt that he could employ the phraseology of inspiration—"Thus saith the Lord."

The contrast between the writers of the New Testament and the Christian authors of the first two centuries, their immediate successors, is particularly worthy of observation. The *descent* from Paul, Peter, and John, to Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, &c., is most remarkable. It is just the difference between mature thought and childish triviality—between a golden and a leaden age—between heaven and earth.

Look also at the *antecedents* of these writers. They were all Jews, originally narrowminded, bigoted, proud of their exclusive privileges, holding the Gentiles in contempt. In all these respects the Apostle Paul stood pre-eminent. Judaism was intensified in him.—Examine now the system of Christian truth as set forth in the apostolic epistles. What spirit-stirring, benign revelations are before us! Earthly distinctions

are lost sight of. The writers think no more of Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians. It is *man*—simple man—ruined man—and all alike ruined. And the Church, as they view and describe it, is one body, composed of believers of all nations and classes, baptized into the same Spirit, all possessing equal rights, and "members one of another." Is there not here an utter abnegation of Jewish exclusiveness? Whence, too, did these men derive those wonderful truths, which they discuss with so much ease and familiarity? Who unveiled to them God's predestination—the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus—the glorious privileges of the adoption—the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers—the mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer, extending to all worlds, all beings, and all time—and the sublime, dread realities of the future state? Verily, these are "the things of the spirit," which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man;" but God revealed them unto these his servants, and they are now inscribed on the immortal page.

There is another consideration of no small moment. The system of truth contained in the apostolic writings is insusceptible of improvement or addition. There have been no discoveries in religion since that time. All philosophy has suffered change. Science alters every year; the theories of one age are exploded in the next; the text-books of fifty years ago are useless now. But Christianity is the same as when it came forth from its Founder. It was complete at the very first. Subsequent writers have expounded the works of the apostles, but they have added nothing to them.—So also of worship, government, and discipline. The examples of the apostolic Churches and the directions given in the apostolic letters are all-sufficient. Churches constituted and governed according to those examples and directions can exist in all countries, and flourish under every form of civil polity, and in every state of Society. And the usefulness attending christian

enterprises is always found to be proportioned to their conformity with New Testament patterns. Meddlesome men have interfered in this matter. The simplicity of apostolic arrangements displeased them. They must have more ceremony, more pomp, more power. Complicated liturgies were prepared—gaudy processions passed along the streets—new offices were created, new orders instituted—and fasts and feasts appointed in abundance. What followed? Withering—decay—corruption—death. Something has been done in the way of reform during the last three hundred years, but the majority of professing christians still adhere to unscriptural polities. Where is Christianity now seen in its most vigorous development. Is it not in those communities which approach most nearly to the apostolic pattern? And must it not be regarded as a most marvellous thing that those Christian Jews should be able to devise a scheme which, though at variance with all the forms of religion then in vogue, and possessed of no outward attractions, should supplant them all, and should be found, at the lapse of eighteen hundred years, to require no change, but to be still the best adapted means of securing the great spiritual purposes of Christianity? Can any thing short of inspiration account for it?

Once more. *Predictions* have been referred to. Let the reader turn to 2 Thess. ii. 1–12, 1 Tim. iv. 1–3, 2 Tim. iii. 1–5. In those passages the apostle Paul foretels the rise of a system, pretending to be religious, which would arrogate divine power and authority; would seek to enforce its claims by false miracles; would be characterized by apostacy from the christian faith, and by demoralising tendencies; would establish creature-worship and would enjoin observances at variance with the laws and arrangements of God. At the time of his writing the letters no one could have anticipated such a lamentable result. All probability was against it. But history has interpreted the prophecy, and Paul takes his place among the prophets. Peter stands by his side (See 2 Peter iii.) And there, too, enshrouded in mysterious glory, is the beloved disciple.

Although many facts and arguments remain unnoticed, the space already occupied warns me to bring these remarks to a close. I trust that those who peruse them will be convinced that we are not only justified but imperatively required to regard the Bible as the production of inspired men, and therefore claiming our submission and obedience. Besides this—every Christian "hath the witness in himself." The word of God speaks to his heart. Its soothing, consoling, sanctifying power proclaims the heavenly source from which it flows. It is his light in darkness, his guide in perplexity, his preservative in peril, his solace in tribulation. What could he do without his Bible?

"What is the world?—A wildering maze,
Where sin hath track'd ten thousand ways,
Her victims to ensnare;
All broad, and winding and aslope,
All tempting with perfidious hope,
All ending in despair.

"Millions of pilgrims throng those roads,
Bearing their baubles, or their loads,
Down to eternal night;—
One humble path, that never bends,
Narrow, and rough, and steep, ascends
From darkness into light.

"Is there a Guide to show that path?
The Bible;—he alone, who hath
The Bible, need not stray:
Yet *he who hath, and will not give*
That heavenly Gui e to all that live,
Himself shall lose the way."

James Montgomery.

(No. 4.)

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

This is the theory :—Bishops succeeded the Apostles in the government of the Church ; the Apostles themselves appointed the first bishops—they ordained others—and so the succession has been preserved till the present day. No person is authorised to preach the gospel who has not been ordained by a bishop, who can himself prove that he is in the succession. Our episcopal friends on all sides—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek and Oriental, take common ground here. They all profess to be able to trace up their orders to the Apostles. They all denounce the non-episcopally ordained as intruders. And they denounce one another.

There are more difficulties in their way than some of them imagine.

In the first place, they must prove that diocesan episcopacy is the mode of Church government established by the Apostles. *They cannot do it.* It was not thought of till some time after the Apostles were dead. The bishops spoken of in the New Testament were pastors of churches, and there were commonly several in each Church. The words "bishop" and "elder" are synonymous. There were several "elders" or "overseers," that is, "bishops," at Ephesus, and at Philippi. See Acts xx. 17, 28. Phil. i. 1.

Secondly, they must prove that every bishop in the first Churches was appointed by an Apostle. *They cannot do it.*

Thirdly, they must prove that the chain of the succession has never been broken. *They cannot do it.* The succession may be interrupted and broken off in various ways ;—by uncanonical appointments—by simoniacal contracts—by forcible intrusions—by official acts without ordination—by the reception of orders from persons whose own claim to episcopal dignity

was invalid, &c. One such case proved will nullify all the official acts of the individual concerned, and of those to whom he may have communicated official power. Pope Benedict IX., for instance, was placed in the papal chair when he was only eighteen years old: some say he was considerably younger. That was clearly contrary to the canons, which declare that a bishop must be thirty years of age, exceptions to which have only occurred when the superior moral qualifications of the candidate induced the ordaining bishops to dispense with the usual requirement; but that was not the pretext in Benedict's case; he was thrust into the office by the Counts of Tuscoli, his father's gold purchasing the acquiescence of the people. As Desiderius says, he "followed the footsteps of Simon Magus rather than of Simon Peter."* Benedict was no priest —no bishop. To say nothing of his manifold villanies (every intelligent Roman Catholic knows that he was a monster of iniquity), a young man of eighteen could not, according to the laws of the Church, be a priest—much less a bishop—much less a Pope. Yet he held the Pope's office, and performed its duties. What was the worth of the ordinations and appointments of such a man! And this is only one fact out of many, equally bad, that might be addueed. The chain of the succession is irretrievably broken. I heartily subscribe to the opinion expressed by Archbishop Whately, already quoted—that "*there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainity his own spiritual pedigree.*"

The Protestant Bishop of Nova Scotia has published his views on the subject, in a charge to his clergy, delivered last October. He says:—"The notion appears to be generally entertained that, because we are not established here, we have no claim to higher authority than any of the sects founded in these latter days by man, it being commonly supposed that the

*Quoted by Neander in his History, iii. 375.

claims of the Church are based upon parliamentary enactments. This error is held even by some of our own people, and it is your duty to beware of countenancing it in any way, and always make it clearly understood that our position is entirely independent of any human authority or recognition; that whether we be prescribed and persecuted, or kings be our nursing fathers and queens our nursing mothers, we equally claim to be the true representatives of the Church constituted by the Apostles,—under commission from her head—from whom we trace our descent in unbroken succession."

I know not by what arguments his Lordship sustains and defends his opinion. Perhaps he takes the position which has been assumed by some members of his Church—that the Apostle Paul first preached the gospel in Britain, and ordained ministers there, from whom the succession has proceeded in the regular order; that in the middle ages, it is true, the Church came under the power of Rome, and was so far contaminated; but that at the Reformation its freedom was regained, and the true succession restored.

It sounds well. One thing only is lacking—TRUTH. No man can prove that the Apostle Paul ever saw Britain. A great deal of ink and paper has been wasted in the attempt. The early Christian writers make no mention of it. Nothing more than a weak probability can be arrived at, and that will not serve the purpose. The fact must be *proved*, which cannot be done.

But even if it *were* proved, the claim would not be established. For though Archbishop Sumner can show that he has been regularly ordained, and that the bishops by whom he was ordained were admitted to the holy office with equal regularity; is he able to prove that all preceding bishops, up to the Apostle Paul—all through the disturbed middle ages, were free from taint of irregularity in ordination? Is he able to prove that all the bishops by whom they were ordained priests were also free from taint? Is he able to prove that every bishop

and every priest, directly or indirectly concerned in these ordinations, received baptism from a regular administrator, and with all prescribed forms? A single flaw—a solitary instance of deviation from the law of the Church, vitiates and annuls the proceeding, and leaves the individual unbaptized, or unordained, as the case may be.

Bishops do not think alike on all points. Let us hear Bishop Hoadly on the succession:—"I am fully satisfied that till a consummate stupidity can be happily established, and universally spread over the land, there is nothing that tends so much to destroy all due respect to the clergy, as the demand of more than can be due to them; and nothing has so effectually thrown contempt upon a regular succession of the ministry, as the calling no succession regular but what was uninterrupted, and the making the eternal salvation of Christians to depend upon that uninterrupted succession, of which the most learned must have the least assurance, and the unlearned can have no notion, but through ignorance and credulity."*

The nature and design of Christianity have been greatly disregarded by the litigants in this strife. It seems to have been forgotten that religious character is essential to the Christian ministry, and that if that be wanting no human appointment can make a man Christ's minister. The gospel dispensation is spiritual, and all the arrangements made under its authority must be in harmony with that view. The blessings of the dispensation cannot be enjoyed nor even apprehended by unrenewed men. Such men, therefore, are totally unfit for the work of the Lord. They may be highly gifted and profoundly learned, but "if they have not the Spirit of Christ they are none of his." How, then, can they carry on his work?

The author's sentiments on this subject were thus expressed in a sermon preached at an ordination in Montreal, in the year 1851:—

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*Quoted in Buck's Theological Dictionary, article "Succession."

"When it is affirmed that HE [Christ] maintains the succession, the meaning is, that ministers are made by Christ, not by man, and that the succession is entirely spiritual—not dependent on any supposed transmission of virtue, power, or authority from one human being to another, but on the possession of those graces and gifts which it is the Saviour's exclusive prerogative to bestow. *By apostolic succession we understand a succession of apostolic men, holding and preaching apostolic truth, and leading apostolic lives.* No others are in the succession, however regularly, as human laws and customs declare, they may have been ordained and appointed. We may suppose a case, not at all unlikely to occur in these days. During the same service the bishop lays his consecrating hands on two candidates for the ministry:—one of them goes forth, preaching full salvation by the death of Christ, and seeking to promote evangelical holiness; the other connects the safety of the soul with baptism and the Church, substitutes the world's morality for the life of faith, and derides as fanatics those who plead for the new birth and for spiritual-mindedness. There is no difficulty in deciding that while the former is evidently in the succession, the latter is not—though both received the same appointment, from the same person, and at the same time. A man may be a minister of a church—of any church—who is not a minister of Christ, and will not be owned by him at the last day.

"That the succession has been maintained is proved by the existence of the Church. It could only have been perpetuated by the means and instruments which the Saviour at first appointed—by the ministry and manifestation of the truth. The fact, that there are at the present day servants of the Lord united together for Christian fellowship, holding the great truths of the gospel, and exemplifying its effects in holy lives and devoted zeal, will surely warrant the inference that in every age there have been such unions, on a greater or smaller scale, maintained by similar instrumentality. The chain of the spiritual succession has not been broken, though we may not

be able to put our hands on every link. It ought not to be considered surprising that we cannot always discover the spiritual family. The Church was at one time in the wilderness; who can wonder that she was not then visible?

"In tracing the true succession we cannot adopt the ordinary course. We have no reverence for episcopal genealogies. The grace of Christ is not limited by ecclesiastical consecrations, with which, in thousands of instances, it has nothing to do. He 'divideth to every man severally as He will.' *We trace the succession, therefore, in the spiritual line.* We see it in Novatian the dissenter, as well as in Cyprian the bishop;—in Vigilantius the reformer, as well as in Jerome who slandered him, and in Augustine, who, though he was a great and good man, would have committed alleged heretics to the civil power, to be punished;—in the Waldensian pedlar who carried his wares to the lordly castle and the peasant's hut, and exhorted all to buy the 'pearl of great price;'—in John de Wycliffe, the canonically ordained Rector of Lutterworth, and in the Lollards who succeeded him, and who, though not canonically ordained, could tell of Christ, and grace, and heaven, and guide men to glory;—in John Huss and Jerome of Prague, both of them burned as heretics;—in Latimer and Ridley, consecrated bishops, and in Calvin and Knox, unconsecrated presbyters;—in Archbishop Leighton, the spiritually minded prelate, and in John Bunyan, the tinker of Elstow, the spiritually minded Baptist;—in Henry Martyn, that 'holy man of God,' the Episcopalian, and in John Williams, the martyr of the nineteenth century, the Congregationalist;—and finally, to speak of living men, we trace the succession in Daniel Wilson, the bishop, who preaches at Calcutta, plainly and faithfully, the same gospel which he once proclaimed in England's metropolis* —and in every native preacher and teacher, encouraged by

* Since dead. He departed this life on the third of January, 1858, in the 80th year of his age.

Christian missionaries of various denominations to make known the great salvation to their fellow-countrymen—of every clime, of every tongue, and of all colours—white, yellow, copper, brown, or black—Hindoos, Indians, Chinese, Hottentots, or Negroes. 'Washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,' and found to be 'faithful men, able to teach others also'—they are all in the succession.

"The faithful Lord will carry on his own work. He will continue the succession till the end of time. That precious promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,' (Mat. xxviii. 20,) secures all. The Church is built on an immovable rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—(Mat. xvi. 18.)

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 5.—Line 6 from bottom, for *thrice* read *twice*.
8.— " 8 " " for *looked* read *look*.
11.— " 3 " top, for *Lecture* read *Cent*.
14.— " 3 " " insert *not* after *did*.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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